

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for removing gas from comminuted lignocellulose material, comprising:

- a. heating the comminuted lignocellulose material as a gravitationally lowering column by supplying steam transverse to the movement of the column;
- b. maintaining the heating ~~so that~~ until a temperature of 80°C to 160° is reached in the column;
- c. introducing the column of the heated lignocellulose material to a horizontal gas removal section and advancing the heated lignocellulose material as a composed bed through the horizontal gas removal section ~~within a time period ranging from 10 to 65 minutes;~~
- d. ~~sealing a gas space above the surface of the composed bed of heated lignocellulose material in the horizontal gas removal section, thereby adjusting the height and form of the top of the composed bed~~ adjusting the advancing of the composed bed through the gas removal section within a time period allowing the temperature of the composed bed to be maintained at approximately the temperature reached in step b by introducing steam beneath the composed bed at the most 30% of the steam supplied to whole apparatus; and
- e. ~~maintaining the temperature of the composed bed in the horizontal gas removal section at approximately the temperature reached in step b by introducing steam beneath the composed bed;~~
- f. removing gas from above the gravitationally lowering column, from ~~the gas space above~~ the top of the composed bed, or both.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein the comminuted lignocellulose material is heated to a temperature of 100°C to 130°C in step b.

4. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the comminuted lignocellulose material is heated in step b to said temperature in a time ranging from 20 to 180 seconds.

5-21. (Canceled)